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CHEN DANYAN**SHANGHAI PRINCESS****Synopsis**

. For more than three decades Australian Chinese Daisy Kwok Bew, the acclaimed heroine of Shanghai, suffered torment, loss of husband, normal life, home, property and family without becoming embittered or broken-hearted. In fact, she concluded that as a result of all her experiences she had lived a very rich life.

Her biographer, Chen Danyan, a 1982 graduate of East China Teachers' University, is one of China's most popular new writers who have emerged since the cultural revolution. She did not meet Daisy until 1997, when she became totally captivated by Daisy's beauty of spirit and optimism, her charm and wit, pride and dignity. Although Daisy's hands were gnarled with toil, her hair already white, her eyes twinkled like diamonds. How was this possible? What sustained her? Danyan determined to write Daisy's story and interviewed her informally for two years up to the day before she died on 25 September 1998.

Daisy's father, George Kwok Bew, was a prosperous banana agent in Sydney, Australia in the early 20th century. At the time of China's republican revolution in 1911 the older conservative Chinese merchants still controlled the Chinese community and wanted to retain the Manchu empire while the republican Dr. Sun Yat-sen wanted to topple it through revolution. But George and a few other younger merchants favoured Dr. Sun's cause. They succeeded in swinging the majority of the Chinese community over to his side by putting up the necessary support and funding. Thus in response to Dr. Sun's invitation, in 1917 George took his family to Shanghai. He was appointed head of the central mint. He was also persuaded to join the Wing On department store, the second of four modern department stores set up by successful Chinese returned from Australia and regarded by the Chinese as among Shanghai's showplaces.

Because the Kwok Bew children did not know Chinese, they were sent to missionary schools where the tuition was mainly in English. Daisy and her elder sisters attended the elite McTyeire girls' school, set up in 1890 by the American Southern Methodist mission, specifically to westernize the daughters of Shanghai's official families. The famous Soong sisters, Soong Ching Ling, the widow of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, and Soong Mei-ling who married Chiang Kai-shek, also attended McTyeire.

After graduating from the missionary-established Yenching University in Peking, Daisy married Woo Yu-hsiang, whom she called YH. They were two free spirits. He was a descendant of Commissioner

Lin Zexu, whose burning of the opium at Canton sparked off the Anglo-Chinese opium war of 1840-42. In 1919, fresh from shouting “Down with Confucius” at the student demonstrations against the Versailles Peace Conference’s decision to award Germany’s concessions in China to Japan, YH went off to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on a Boxer indemnity fund scholarship to study electrical engineering. He returned to China filled with American ideas. He wanted to get rich quick. Daisy’s world outlook had been formed in the McTyeire school library. She had never known the meaning of want and longed to establish her own independent career.

By 1949 YH was successfully managing his own company, importing scientific instruments from Germany. Neither YH nor Daisy were politically inclined but they enthused over the arrival of the people’s liberation army in Shanghai in 1949 as the beginning of a golden age. Unlike the private capitalists who fled, they decided to stay. In 1954 when the private capitalists were called on to transform their businesses into joint-state-private enterprises, YH willingly acceded. He joined members of his staff parading on the streets, clanging cymbals and beating drums.

But the golden age didn’t last. YH’s enthusiastic response to the communist party’s call for criticism of its policies, led to his being named a rightist. He was stripped of his managerial position and arrested shortly afterwards. He never saw his family again and died in Shanghai’s Ti Lan Prison hospital in 1961. The verdict handed down after his death found him an active counter-revolutionary, guilty of illegal foreign exchange dealings and possession of a revolver for sinister purposes. Daisy’s assets were appropriated to repay the state US\$64,000 and Renminbi 130,000, calculated as representing the loss caused the state..

Now came Daisy’s turn. After YH’s arrest in 1937 she was sent to a brain-washing class with others of capitalist origin. Her first task was to clean out the women’s toilets each morning before breakfast. She had to extricate the buckets from pits in the ground, deliver them to the ponds and empty them and then take them to the river to be washed. No one helped those sent to clean the toilets. The work was regarded as demeaning as well as a form of punishment. It was never ending. But Daisy became expert at it.

She was next transferred from her office job to the Shanghai foreign trade department’s farm to reform herself through labour. She took part in factory work, iron smelting, road construction, building construction, preparing cabbages for export, and seasonal farmwork. Her daughter, a ballet dancer, was excluded from performance tours. Her son only just managed to be admitted to university when restrictions on intellectuals were relaxed during the hard famine years. The family became shunned. Yet despite all these trials, Daisy held her head high. She never complained. She was determined not to inflict further suffering on her children by any action on her part.

When she became 55 in 1963, the normal retirement age for women, she was recalled to Shanghai and told to teach English in the department’s evening university for staff members. Her lectures became so popular that students cut classes to attend hers, resulting in some jealousy among the teachers. That same year the “four cleanups” movement to root out corruption among grass-root officials began. Daisy was seized on as a ready-made first target for the university’s open criticism sessions. Everyone was required to speak, even if they did not know Daisy. But most of Daisy’s weak-kneed colleagues wanted to save themselves first while the ambitious seized the opportunity to work off their jealousy and frustrations. Their searing of Daisy reached the height of madness. It was the prelude to the cultural revolution, still two years off.

With the onset of the cultural revolution in 1966, Daisy’s parents’ gravesite was vandalized. Their remains as well as YH’s ashes, also buried there, disappeared altogether. Daisy and Zhong Zheng were driven out of their home to live in an attic, allowed to take only a minimum of furniture and clothes.

The rest of her property was confiscated and her wages cut to a fraction. Meanwhile she was sent to work in the foreign trade department's market stalls.

Two years later she was despatched to work with a group of women cadres who had been in charge of running the "four cleanups" movement. Outside of her regular farm work, they required Daisy to empty and wash the dormitory nightsoil bucket. By now she could no longer carry the bucket by herself so one of them would help her move it to the edge of the cesspool. This was how they were always careful to distinguish between Daisy and themselves. Daisy had to do all the rest. They abused and bullied her to justify their own correct political stand. She never could relax.

Although Daisy spoke freely about her earlier experiences, by contrast she said very little about the cultural revolution. She explained that recalling it was like going through it all over again, and this was very painful. But her story is filled with insights into the way in which Confucian thought has fossilized Chinese thinking for more than 2,000 years.

In 1969 she was sent to join capitalists from Shanghai undergoing reform through labour at farms on Tsung Ming Island at the mouth of the Yangtze river. The first few months, she said, was like being exposed to a pack of wolves. But she learned to adapt to her situation. When Danyan said she would have committed suicide Daisy disagreed. She said the situation might seem fearful but once you went through it you would lose all fear.

Finally by 1971, Daisy and other older reformees were allowed to retire and return to Shanghai to live on their pittances. The cultural revolution had played itself out. Incorrect decisions slowly began to be corrected. As China started opening up again, Daisy became honoured instead of vilified. She was invited to become advisor to a foreign trade consultancy as well as tutored students of English. She made 6 trips abroad until ill health prevented further travel. Before her death she donated her remains to the Chinese Red Cross Society for scientific research.

* * *

1910

One year old - Sydney

A Pair of White Bootees

There were 2 gardens. The first was what we called the Rose Garden. Dadda loved flowers, especially roses, so the flower beds were full of different varieties. At the end of this garden was a trellis which was covered with a climbing variety of roses. Beyond the trellis was the second garden.. It had a lawn in the middle with flower beds surrounding it.

It was the second of April, 1910. Perhaps those tall Australian trees had already shed many leaves in the sunshine and wind. Had the chrysanthemums already dropped their buds as in the old English song about roses? It was one of countless Australian autumns. But I have no way of knowing.

Nor was the little girl in the photograph able to recall this. On the 24th of September, 1998, she took another look at the photo, stretching out her hand to touch this first birthday image of herself, exclaiming:

“Is this my daughter? I can’t believe this is my first birthday photo.”

She touched the little girl’s porcelain-like forehead with a life-wrinkled finger.

Was the photographer’s floor a wooden one? Did the white lacy dress rustle? Were slides used? Did it take long? Was it easy for the little girl to pose so peacefully and seriously? No one knows now. Her father drove her and her mother to the photographer’s but he died in Shanghai in 1932 when she was already an attractive girl not yet graduated from Yenching University. When her mother died in Shanghai in 1947, she was a beautiful young matron with two children of her own. But the memories of these events in Sydney’s Campbell Street went with her parents forever.

I was born in Campbell Street, Sydney, on April 2, 1909. I was the seventh child. Later on we moved to Dowling Street, a house opposite a public park. All I remember of the house is that I had diphtheria there, and passed it on to Edie and Percy. I think I was kept isolated on the porch. When I was about 4 or 5, we moved to 2 Croydon Street, Petersham. Dadda had bought this house. There were 2 gardens, a large chicken coop, a pigeon house, stables for our two ponies and a yard with a well in it. The well was no longer in use of course.

She wore a lacy white dress. She was the seventh child and her well-to-do parents wanted her to have a first birthday photograph as a reminder of her start in life. Did they wish her a life of one hundred years? Plump and serene, her soft-soled shoes facing the camera had not a speck of dust on them. She could hardly walk then, so nothing could soil her shoes. Perhaps her father said:

“Smile, Daisy dear”.

Coming from his home in Chung Shan county and building his prosperity in the fruit trade, he loved this seventh child most of all. He had her crib placed next to his own bedroom so he could attend to her at night. More about these happenings in 1910 I have no way of knowing, but Daisy left detailed descriptions of their old home in the draft of her memoirs.

THE HOUSE WE LIVED IN (2 Croydon St., Petersham, Sydney)

I had a letter from my brother, Georgie, in Honolulu telling me he had a picture of our old family homestead in Australia. I asked to send it to me as the news brought back so many memories. Georgie had just taken a trip to Sydney and had visited the old house which was still there. I was 8 years old when we left Australia, but I still had a vivid memory of the house.

The main entrance was a gate which led to the steps to the front door. However, I usually entered the house by turning to the right and going into the garden and then around to a back entrance. There were 2 gardens, the first was what we called the Rose Garden. Dadda loved flowers, especially roses, so the flower beds were full of different varieties. At the end of this garden was a trellis which was covered with a climbing variety of roses. Beyond the trellis was the second garden. It had a lawn in the middle with flower beds surrounding it.

Beside this garden was what we called the "well yard", as there was a well, of course no longer with any water in it. From this garden I could enter the house by steps which led to an enclosed porch. Beyond the well yard were the stables. We had 2 ponies. A gate in this yard was the back entrance through which the sulky and phaeton could go.

It was an old fashioned 2-storied house. When we moved in, the gas jets were still there, but we used electricity.

The front door opened into a long hallway. On the left was was the living room or parlor, a very large room. I remember that it was big enough to hold two sets of furniture. On the other side of the hall were 2 rooms. The first was called the study, but actually in it was a long table on which Dad kept albums of his old cronies. When they came to visit, they would go over the pictures to recall their earlier days together. We youngsters were not very interested in these albums, but to Dadda they were his prize possessions and he even took them back to China with us.

These three rooms were not often used, except for entertaining, especially the Sunday lunches which I described elsewhere. Breakfast and lunch were eaten in the kitchen, but dinner was served in the dining room. As a rule we ate western style food, as our maid was an Australian. Next to the kitchen was the laundry. A side entrance was in the kitchen. This opened onto a lane which led to the front, (Croydon St.) That completes the ground floor.

The stairway which was at the end of the hall led to 2 hallways, one lower than the other. The larger on the right led towards the front of the house where there were 5 bedrooms. The first two which overlooked the street were my father's and mother's rooms. Next to Dad's room which was on the right side of the hall was Leon and Wally's room. Opposite them were 2 smaller rooms, one for Edie and the other for Pearl and Elsie. I slept in Dadda's room and Georgie in Mum's.

The other hallway led past 2 rooms to the bathroom and toilet. Percy occupied the first room while the other was for the maid.

I might add here that Dad's and Mum's rooms opened to a long veranda overlooking Croydon St. That is the house as I remember it.

This description contrasts sharply with the outbreak of the cultural revolution in 1966 when Daisy and her son, Zhong Zheng, were driven out of their home to live in an attic. The roof of the attic leaked. They were forced out of their home in winter in the madness of the initial period of the cultural revolution. Daisy's recollections of that period are incomplete and fragmentary, but I could well imagine the pain she went through just thinking about it. The way she switched from writing about the happenings in 1966 to recall her childhood home in 1910, suggests that old house was the best and safest place she had known in her life.

Who could have foretold in 1910 what threats this world would bring to her?

Everyone looked on her as blessed with good fortune. Nothing but a bright future awaited this healthy and beautiful child. Who could have imagined that in 1972 after she retired she would live alone in a tiny north-facing attic, all her possessions long lost or confiscated, that she would have to depend on a monthly pension of thirty-six yuan, sufficient only in 1972 to buy the simplest of food. In winter, even the air she breathed out would quickly freeze, while in the summer, she would sit on her doorstep hoping a breeze from her south-facing neighbour might reach her.

On the evening of the 25th of September 1998, she peacefully passed away in her own home. The Shanghai Red Cross Society and the Shanghai Medical University took away her body. In 1985 she had of her own free will donated her remains to the Red Cross Society. By then her son's family had already moved to the United States, while her second husband, David Wang, had died two years earlier when she was seventy-seven. Thus in the autumn of 1998, her ninety-year old body made its last trip through the streets of Shanghai in a Red Cross Society vehicle..

Daisy first arrived in Shanghai in 1918 with the rest of her family. Before leaving she innocently told her playmates:

“Dad is taking the whole family to a restaurant called Shanghai.”

Shanghai was neither Daisy's birthplace, nor her native home. By 1949 most of her brothers and sisters had left together with their families. But Daisy remained. In 1969 she was sent to Tsung Ming Island to be remoulded through labour and was dubbed by others there as “that old foreign woman”. Only in 1990 did she finally pay a return visit to her birthplace of Australia, after which she returned to Shanghai. She later went to the United States but again she returned to Shanghai. The donation of her remains to medical research was her final gift to Shanghai. The Australian Consul-General in Shanghai, as the representative of Daisy's native home, also paid his last respects at her memorial service. Actually, Daisy's funeral took place in the dissecting room of the medical institute.

Lying beneath the shadowless lights, her fringe cut short,, her forehead looked as it was when she who was one year old, her serenity already revealed then, glistening like a pebble after ninety years of water had passed over it. A ceiling of glass surrounded the shadowless lights. I wondered if, as the medical students stood there and watched their instructors , they had noticed the expression on her face.

Mozart's Requiem was played at the memorial service and Daisy was dressed in her favourite Chinese-style black jacket. For 60 years she had given up wearing western clothes. She looked upon herself as Chinese and believed she should wear Chinese-style clothes, just as she had in the twenties and thirties, the height of her halcyon days. Officials from the Overseas Chinese Office said they had only just learned she was a Chinese from overseas, who returned to China as a child. She had never mentioned this to them before.

The small icy room's wall of green tiles was covered with 36 arrangements of fresh flowers, their scent redolent of their fleeting life. There were many white lilies, their pure white colour and splendour matching that of Daisy. There were also many unopened chrysanthemum buds, because she always liked chrysanthemums. Her English name was Daisy, meaning chrysanthemum; they shared the same name. Fresh flowers surrounded her and her photograph.

I called on her on the afternoon of September 24th with some white roses which she placed in water on top of the small green cupboard. This was one of the very few articles of furniture she was allowed to take with her when she was driven from her home in 1966. As she re-arranged the roses, she said:

“You know how I love flowers. They are so beautiful.”

She too looked beautiful that day. Her snow-white hair had been freshly permed. It was her last twilight. I wonder if thoughts of the garden in her old home in Australia crossed her mind that day, the roses her Dad had planted. She loved fresh flowers, just like her father.

In her last days she said she sometimes saw reflections floating against the ceiling, but she knew they were spirits, she was not afraid. Perhaps they were the spirits of her relatives, come to receive her, just

as when she was one -year old she was driven to the photographer's and now they had come to take her to their place of reunion.

1915

Six Years Old

A Chinese Restaurant called "Shanghai"

Daisy used to watch her Dad taking her Mum and elder sister to the opera. They would dress up on such occasions and there was always a box of chocolates. As a result she grew up looking forward to a similar future.

In September 1987 she left Shanghai to visit her son, Zhong Zheng, and his family in the United States, as well as other members of her own family whom she had not seen for more than 30 years.

Her husband, Woo Yu-hsiang, had been arrested in 1958 and ordered to repay the government US\$64,000. At the time Daisy had written to her relatives abroad asking for financial help. Of all the many letters she wrote however, only Wally responded. He sent her US\$ 8,000, a loan she had earlier made to him. When she started teaching English in 1962, he also sent her English textbooks and the latest edition of a dictionary. But she lost contact with him after the cultural revolution began.

As children, Wally had always been the leader of the two, making all sorts of suggestions to her. During their 6-week sea-trip to Shanghai on a Japanese mail boat, their favourite game had been "follow the leader". This was when his leadership over her became firmly established..

Before the family left Sydney their parents took them to the photographer's. Daisy was then taller than Wally but he insisted she be seated so that he would appear to be the taller. They were the closest among all their siblings. While Daisy was in her teens, Wally suggested she should learn to play the piano as well as drive a car, then considered fashionable pursuits for girls belonging to Shanghai's social elite.

In 1957 Daisy's youngest brother, Georgie, suddenly departed for Canton, from where he slipped across the border into Hong Kong. While clearing out his desk before leaving, he discovered a secret drawer containing a revolver belonging to his second elder brother, Leon. In 1947 T. V. Soong¹ had helped the Wing On Company overcome a financial crisis. As a result Leon had been appointed the company's director. However, earlier in 1948, the capitalists in Shanghai were pressed to surrender their foreign exchange holdings in order to bolster the issue of a new currency by the Nanking Government. This drive was conducted by Chiang Ching-kuo, a son of Chiang Kai-shek. Fearing for his personal safety Leon handed over his desk to his younger brother Georgie and fled overseas. George was only one of the managers. The night before Georgie left for Canton in 1957, he took the revolver to Daisy and asked her to get rid of it. It was possession of this firearm, which had never

been used that became one of the crimes listed against Daisy's husband, Woo Yu-hsiang, who buried the revolver beneath a tree in their garden.

Georgie never knew what happened after he left Shanghai. When Daisy met him again he and his wife were running a beauty parlour in Hawaii. He was wearing shirts splashed with floral designs, a popular Hawaiian fashion. With age he looked more like an older man of Jewish background, rather than the pudgy little boy in the early family photo. Daisy never really told Georgie about the outcome of the revolver. She thought there was no point in doing so anymore.

Daisy's third sister, Elsie, had been chosen as the first Miss Shanghai. The early family photos had shown her promising to develop into an attractive and lively young woman. By the time of Daisy's visit she and her husband had passed away after spending years in the United States. After she and her sisters had graduated from McTyeire School for Girls, Elsie had become an accomplished horsewoman, dancer, and archer. She used to take Daisy out to speed with other cars until they found out a car they were trying to overtake was driven by Wally. Elsie entered the Miss Shanghai competition after Daisy had gone to Peking to study psychology. Daisy then wrote to Elsie urging her to give up her senseless activities. But when Elsie wanted to elope with the man she loved, Daisy was the first to support her. Elsie died in the United States in 1980 and Daisy was too late to see her again. But she saw the photos of her once vivacious elder sister.

Upon her arrival in the United States, Daisy was urged to write the story of her life. She therefore spent a whole summer doing two university writing courses with a view to brushing up her English. From the time she had left Australia in her childhood she had always attended English-speaking schools and had mostly spoken and used English. Gradually she became more familiar with Chinese after entering middle school, but never as her native tongue. It was not until the fifties when members of the old capitalist class were compelled to undergo brain-washing that she took up the study of Chinese seriously. Finally in 1971 the time came for the members of the old capitalist class Daisy was working with to retire. They were given a final dressing down by the rebel red guards in charge of them and called on to tell how they intended to continue their ideological remoulding. When Daisy said she would continue to study Chinese in order to be able to go on studying Mao's works, she won their praise.

She started to write her memoirs in September 1989.

I attended the primary school on Crystal Street, just around the corner from where we lived. I started from the kindergarten. On Sundays we went to Sunday school. Our parents attended the Cantonese church down town. Dadda gave each of us (Elsie, Wally and me) a penny for the collection box. One day on our way to Sunday school Wally said he would show us another route. He stopped at an ice-cream parlor and suggested we have an ice cream cone. He told me to use the penny to buy the cone and use the half-penny change for the collection plate. That was Wally! However, I always did what he told me to do.

There was much racial discrimination in both schools. The children at Sunday School called me all sorts of names, so I decided not to go there again. One day the headmaster came to find out what was wrong. My mother answered the door bell. I followed her to the door, and when I saw who it was I hid behind her. When I heard his complaint I stepped forward and told him I was not going to attend Sunday School as long as I was being called names.

Her memoirs also revealed how deeply impressed she was by her parents' and elder sister's visits to the opera.

"How I longed to grow up and go with them," she wrote.

In 1917 her father, George Kwok Bew², in response to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's invitation, arrived in Shanghai with a fellow clansmen, Kwok Gew. Shanghai was where the modern department store of the Wing On Company was being established. Daisy's mother and the younger children followed later. They stayed in the Oriental Hotel, owned by her mother's Ma clan. The Mas had already set up the Sincere Department Store opposite the site of the Wing On Company. Daisy would look out of the hotel window at the rising layers of the Wing On building, still covered with green bamboo scaffolding. In those early days the appearance of these new department stores symbolized the growth of Chinese capital and the economic development that was taking place in Shanghai.

One day Daisy noticed something white floating outside the hotel window. She opened the window and stretched out her hand to catch some of the white material and then rushed to her mother's room. By this time only a few drops of water remained in her hand. Her mother laughed and explained that this was snow, which Daisy had never seen before in Sydney.

Our Uncle Gock Lock, whose first wife was my mother's sister, also lived in the same hotel. He was to be the managing director of the new Wing On Company with my father. He had a Ford car which was considered very luxurious in those days. Sometimes he took us out to the countryside. Actually we only went as far as the Bubbling Well but at that time it was open space. We felt we had driven a long, long way.

Unconsciously, Daisy's memoirs reflect a child's sense of peaceful security. In fact, no one knew what lay ahead of them. Daisy had no idea that in 1967 she and fellow teachers from her school, considered to have "problems", such as a capitalist background, would be sent to a factory to work. One day over lunch, they spoke to each other in English. Asked what she intended to do during the break, Daisy said she wanted to go to the Park Hotel to buy some bread. Then she added,

"You know, the bread they make now is better than before liberation³."

I think she must have said this deliberately because she noticed two of the factory workers sitting at the same table as them. After the break these teachers were unexpectedly told to wait in a small downstairs room. At first they thought there was going to be a meeting from which the capitalist elements would be excluded. But as they went below, they realized a whole roomful of people were waiting for them.

The worker- in- charge asked all those who knew English to stand up in front and Daisy did so. She noticed that one of the workers who had shared a table with them at lunch was also present. He fetched the two other teachers who were at the same table to the front.

He came forward and told me to kneel down. I did. He tapped me on the head. Out of curiosity I looked up to see what he had hit me with. It was a broom. I wondered whether they meant to beat me up, but instead he told me to report what I had said while working upstairs. I told them in Chinese. He accused me of lying. "I understand English," he said, "didn't you mention the word 'park'? You intended going to the park at lunch time. Who were you going to meet there? and for what?" I told him I was going to the Park Hotel, not the park. "Oh yes," he said, "you claimed that the bread after liberation was no good. Do you deny that you had mentioned the park and bread?"

That shows how things could be twisted. After a few more taps on the head with the broom the meeting was adjourned. He felt he had exposed how bad and dishonest a capitalist was.

How could Daisy have known back in 1915 that one day she would have to confront such humiliation! Yet she was able to live on in the face of it without becoming broken-hearted or an embittered old person.

*

Notes:

¹T.V.Soong: Served in various ministerial positions, including foreign minister and prime minister, under the nationalist government. He and his sisters became friends of Daisy's brothers and sisters during their school days.

²George Kwok Bew: was a proprietor of the Wing Sang Company, one of the biggest banana agents in Sydney. He played a leading part in the extension of support to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's republican cause by the Chinese in Australia in the early 1900s. The rise of the Chinese merchant elite was made possible by the flourishing banana growing industry in northern Queensland in the 1880s and 1890s.

They also developed a fruit trade with Fiji. The origin of the three biggest department stores, the Wing On, the Sincere and the Sun, in Hong Kong, Canton and Shanghai could be traced to the fruit companies in Sydney and Melbourne. The earliest, the Sincere & Company Ltd in Hong Kong, was founded in 1900. It grew out of the Wing Sang & Company, set up in 1890. The largest, the Wing On & Company, was opened in Hong Kong in 1907, having as its origin a Sydney Chinese fruit store set up in 1897.

Overseas Chinese played a significant part in fostering Chinese nationalism which led to the downfall of the Manchu empire. Chinese nationalism emerged in the form of two rival movements – reformist and revolutionary. The former was led by a moderate group who wanted to reform China within the existing framework of the Manchu empire. The latter, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, favoured the removal of the Manchu regime by revolution. Before the fall of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, the Chinese merchants led the royalist movement. But after 1911 George Kwok Bew and a few other merchants supported Sun Yat-sen. They provided the support and funds needed to win a sweeping victory for the nationalists throughout the Pacific area. The Chinese community, particularly those from Chungshan county, looked upon George Kwok Bew as their leader and friend. Kwok Bew was a proprietor of the Wing Sang Company. But the Kwoks, Mas and Lis lived in neighbouring villages. They intermarried.

When he returned to China in 1917 his fellow clansmen in the Wing On Company finally succeeded in persuading him to enhance the Wing On Company's biggest department store in Shanghai with his name by becoming its first director. He was also appointed head of the Central Mint set up by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. His signature appeared on all the banknotes.

See: Yong, C. F., *The New Golden Mountain*, (Raphael Arts Pty. 1977)

Yong, C.F., 'The Banana Trade and the Chinese in New South Wales and Victoria', ANU Historical Journal, 1965-66 V.1. No. 2 pp. 28-35.

Yong, C.F., 'The Chinese Revolution of 1911: Reactions of Chinese in New South Wales and Victoria', Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, V. 2, No. 46, April 1966, pp. 213-229.

³'before liberation': 'before liberation' and 'after liberation' were terms based on Chinese usage adopted at the time to mean before and after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949.

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Translated from the Chinese by Leonard WOO
